

of 20.2.1779 he had been detained at Basra by the illness of Fr. Fulgentius, supposed that by then he would have reached Julfa, whither they were sending the letter and a special grant of money. Further letters were dispatched on 8.7.1780 and 9.12.1780<sup>1</sup> to this Religious, encouraging him to proceed to Persia (as he was still in Basra). Yet, besides renewing the faculties of Fr. John son of Aratun in 1783, in the session of the Sac. Congregation on 21.3.1791 the Secretary spoke of him as 'Administrator':

"The information which had already been received from the Vicar Apostolic at Constantinople, and from the pro-Vicar of Baghdad regarding the emigration of Catholics from Persia is now confirmed by Fr. John son of Aratun, *Administrator of the Bishopric of Isfahan*, himself in a letter dated Julfa, 30.11.1789. He says that the Persian mission, so flourishing at one time, *by the oppression of that tyrannical government* has been reduced to the number of seven Catholics all told—all the rest have run away or died. . . . In that state of things he has often asked for advice and assistance from the Sac. Congregation, but not having obtained it and being no longer able to exist there he says that he has determined to abandon those empty churches, and escape with the few Catholics who have remained to Baghdad.

"And afterwards a letter came from Fr. Fulgentius of S. Mary, the pro-Vicar in Baghdad, announcing to us that the Administrator together with his Catholics had safely reached Baghdad, where he thinks of settling. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

It appears, therefore, that it was the renewed struggle and further fighting between the Zands and Qajars, and the disorders and lawlessness that prevailed in the years between Karim Khan's death in 1779 and 1791, which finally ruined the Catholic Armenians of Julfa. The Armenian colony in Baghdad today is one outcome of that emigration.

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Seeing that subsequently to the announcement of the death of Bishop Philip Mary of Isfahan in 1749 no letters of Carmelites written from Julfa have been traced and after the departure of Fr. Sebastian from Julfa in 1752 no priest of the Order resided there, and no letters from Fr. Urban at Bandar 'Abbas, which he left in 1755, little remains to be noted about the Convent and Residences established by the Order in Persian territory, apart from what has been already stated in this chapter and elsewhere in connection with the short-lived foundations on Kharg and at Bushire. But in the terminology of the Order the "Persian Mission" survived as a unit in their House at Basra, though, strictly speaking, it lay outside the limits of Persia: and with regard to that unit and nucleus a few points may here be noted—the student interested in details will find sixty pages with many interesting historical data, most of it in the ironic vein of Fr. Angel Felix, in *Cont. Basra Chron. (Chronica Bassorensis Missionis)*, the Latin manuscript annals printed and edited by Fr. Ambrose of S. Teresa, Archivist General of the Order, in 1934. During the twenty years, 1752–72, some fifteen to twenty Carmelite Religious arrived out from Europe and passed longer or shorter periods at the Residence in Basra: and it seems curious that at least half of them were dispatched for service 'in Persia' by the heads of the Order, whether the latter were oblivious to the almost complete exodus of Uniat Armenians and to the anarchy which deterred even Carmelite bishops from venturing into the interior, or else sanguine that soon the roads would become safe, order be restored, and then the Religious to staff the abandoned Houses would be ready to hand. In one case, at any rate, an appointment was made to Shiraz, where the Carmelite

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere dalla Sac. Cong.*, vol. 236, pp. 493, 883.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Fr. L. Lemmens, O.F.M., in *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, No. 10.